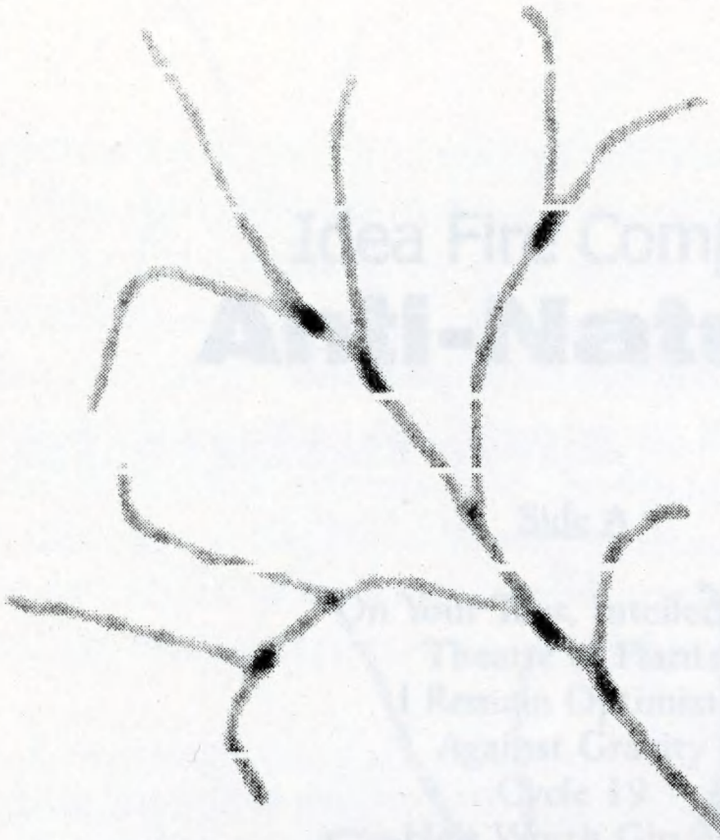
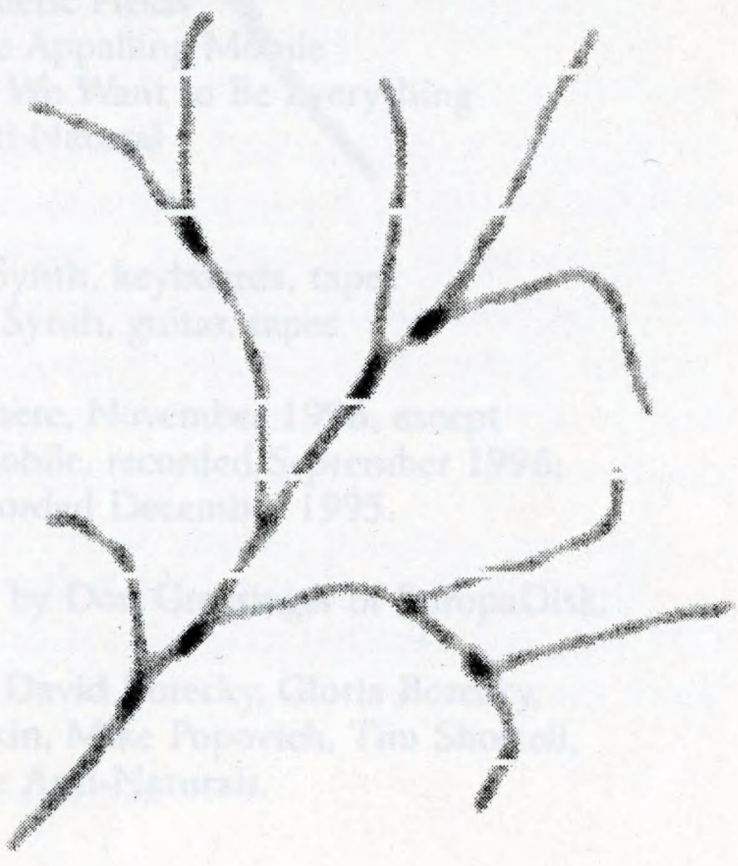


The Idea Fire Company

Anti-Natural



Idea Fire Company

Anti-Natural

Side A

On Your Toes, Intellectuals!
Theatre of Plants
I Remain Optimistic
Against Gravity
Cycle 19
He's Worth Gin Ad
Table of Denial Orders
G.M.S.

Side B

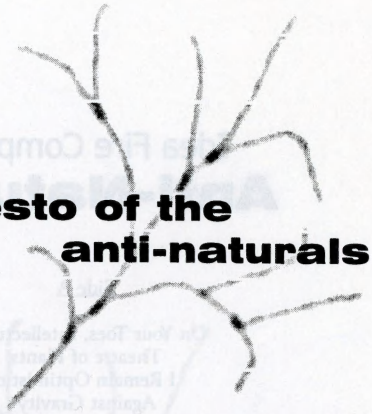
The Red Disk
Magnetic Fields
Square of the Appalling Mobile
We Are Nothing and We Want to Be Everything
Anti-Natural

Karla Borecky - Synth, keyboards, tapes
Scott Foust - Synth, guitar, tapes

Recorded at the Unisphere, November 1996, except
Square of the Appalling Mobile, recorded September 1996;
Anti-Natural, recorded December 1995.

Expertly mastered and EQ'ed by Don Grossinger of EuropaDisk.

Thanks to Bob Beerman, David Borecky, Gloria Borecky,
Janet Foust, Graham Lambkin, Mike Popovich, Tim Shortell,
and all the Anti-Naturals.



the manifesto of the anti-naturals

The Anti-Natural is a critique of the notion of the natural in aesthetic and political theory. Historically, the 'natural' has been equated with the 'good.' It has been, and still is, used to signify that which cannot or should not be changed in society or personality. By opposing it, we demand that one take responsibility for one's thought: nothing is exempted from critical examination and everything is subject to change.

Our culture is the result of three major ideological forces: consumer capitalism, Judeo-Christian morality, and the positivist science of the mind. These three forces produce in individuals a desire for authenticity, the specious end-product of the quest for the 'natural.' Authenticity is not a state of primitive freedom from the constraints imposed by modern society; rather, it is a state of total conformity with the demands of these institutions. There is no condition more compatible with the system of commodities.

The Anti-Natural opposes authenticity. Instead, we advocate the total aestheticization of one's experience. The aesthete makes of life an art object, and by doing so, asserts the

superiority of the constructed self/society over the 'natural.'

The Anti-Natural undermines consumer capitalism by embracing the negative, as well as the good, the true, and the beautiful—using them to create an entirely artificial state. The system of commodities corrupts the aesthetic impulse into no more than the practice of shopping and self-help. The increasing intrusion of the system of commodities (or, an increase in the prescribed importance of shopping in both the quantitative and qualitative sense) accounts for the perception of the past as being somehow more authentic.

Consumer capitalism endows commodities with metaphysical qualities that are quite separate from the aesthetic qualities of objects. We intend to resurrect aestheticization as a critique of consumer capitalism. Art, in the guise of entertainment, will no longer serve as the banal accomplice of money. Because of the recuperation of the aesthetic impulse, people experience art only as advertising or self-help. The system of commodities, therefore, has removed the only force capable of its destruction. Our program will reassert the critical value of art.

The total aestheticization of experience requires an ongoing act of the will. One's personal and social practice is to be regarded as an art object. This art object is a constructed one, in the sense of being intentionally planned and executed. The aesthete brings a rational and reflexive critique to bear on all aspects of experience.

This is not to say that everyone should produce art. But the acts of aesthetic creation and appreciation are available to everyone, and should be applied to all manner of activities.

The entire character is constructed with an aesthetic awareness. This is reflected in an identifiable style, though it is by no means limited to that. Style and substance are united. Character results from a continuous self-examination and an effort to improve oneself in light of theoretical understanding and productive creativity.

Social relations are as much the subject of aestheticization as one's character. The aesthete brings theory to bear on social practice, resulting in rational and egalitarian social arrangements. The search for scapegoats for the misery caused by consumer capitalism is what perpetuates tribal notions such as racism, sexism, nationalism, etc. Since no group identities are to be accepted as 'natural,' no allegiances are given unintentional or uncritical priority. Race and gender discrimination, nationalism and religious bigotry are subject to the withering critique of this aesthetic optimism.

The Anti-Natural is not anti-nature or anti-environment. Quite the contrary, it is the only effective and rational environmentalism. An aesthetic approach to experience makes possible a true understanding of our relationship to the Earth and all its inhabitants. Only the aesthete can protect the world from the environmental disaster caused by consumer capitalism.

As aesthetes, we challenge the exchange-value approach to environmentalism currently advocated by corporations, particularly those that exploit natural resources. However, we are all implicated by our participation in the system of commodities, whether or not we support such band-aid activities as recycling and conservation. Only through the

aestheticization of experience do we gain the critical insight to directly oppose the commodification of the natural world.

The system of commodities encourages a self-indulgent passivity, in which one's discriminatory powers are renounced in favor of some set of unquestioned rules. Consumption is the only domain in which one is allowed to exercise the will to choose, resulting in the fetishization of consumer choice.

The post-modernist's reaction to this passivity has been to destroy the value of choice altogether. In the eyes of the post-modernist, any option is as good as any other. Everything is reduced to the vicissitudes of an ironic and conspicuously clever personal style.

The Anti-Natural reclaims the value of a rational objectivity, grounded in aesthetic judgment.

The Anti-Natural removes artists from their shallow roles as entertainers, advertisers, and comforters. Instead, artists will represent the vanguard of total aestheticization.

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